

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 10 and 11 are withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a non-elected species. Claims 1-9, 12-14 and 16-18 are rejected. Claims 15 and 19 are objected to but would be allowable if placed in independent form. Claims 20 and 21 are allowed. Claims 2, -4, 10, 13, 15 and 17-19 are amended. Claims 1, 12, 14 and 16 are cancelled.

Withdrawn Finality

Applicants greatly appreciate that the Examiner has agreed with Applicants' request to withdraw the finality of the previous Office Action, has entered our response filed on June 8, 2005, and has issued the present Office Action, which has been made it final.

Telephone Interview

Applicants also greatly appreciate the courtesy extended by the Examiner to the Applicants' representative in a telephone interview conducted on April 18, 2006. During the interview, Applicants' representative noted with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 15 and 19 were allowable. It also was noted that the limitations that were included in those claims also appeared in claims 10, , 11 and 13. Applicants requested the Examiner to consider these claims allowable as well, even though they presently are withdrawn. The Examiner advised that if the same limitations are in the claims as in the allowable claims, they will be rejoined into the case and allowed. The Examiner also agreed to enter an amendment placing the claims into allowable form, even though the application is under final rejection.

Accordingly, Applicants have done the following in order to secure allowance of the present application:

- (1) Amended claims 15 and 19, which contain a basis for allowable subject matter, to be in independent form.
- (2) Amended claims 17 and 18 to now depend from allowable claim 19.

(3) Amended claims 10 and 13, which contain the same basis for allowable subject matter, to be in independent form. In this regard, claim 10 has had the “updates” and “effects” functions separated for consistency with other allowable claims.

(4) Amended claims 2, 3 and 4 to now depend from allowable claim 10.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-4, 6, 12-14, 16-17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki (6,488,582) in view of Peppel (6,200,216). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

As to claims 1, 12, 14 and 16, the rejection is moot in view of the cancellation of these claims.

With respect to claims 2-4, 6, 13, 17 and 18, they either are an allowable independent claim or depend from an allowable independent claim.

Claims 5, 7, 8 and 9 are Rejected Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki and Peppel, as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Matsuno (6,729,960). This rejection is traversed for at least the following reasons.

Again, these claims now depend from claim 10, which contains subject matter that is a basis for allowability. Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Application No. 09/880,833

Q64955

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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